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ITEMS FOR ITEMIZING

Inside this issue you'll find items on USDA's new inf center... going UPS instead of USPS...a list of dates and sites for structures meetings...some recent ideas...an update on AGNET from Wyoming...more job opportunities...and the usual chitchat.

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NEW CENTER OPENS

Ed Poe, GPA's distribution chief, proudly points out that USDA has a new visitor information center..."housed in a neat package on the first floor" of the department's administration building. Some minor "hem stitching," as he calls it--such as drapes, pictures, ornamental plants, and additional furniture--will put the place in top shape soon, but it's already open for business.

Out-of-townners should remember that when they come to D.C., the center is the place they can pick up copies of publications, ask questions about how to get to various places in USDA, use the phone...some folks have even been known to park their luggage there for awhile. Operators of the center handle telephone calls at the rate of one every minute-and-a-half from consumers, educators, farmers, other government agencies, and folks from foreign countries and get thousands of visitors yearly.

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WHAT? NO PONY EXPRESS?

For years, the Superintendent of Documents has mailed publications for USDA through the U.S. Postal Service. Bills from USPS are made up on a formula based on surveying shipments, statistical "occurrences" of package weights, and multiplying the figures obtained by zone charges for particular weight class. Result of such a system brought overcharges sometimes...and undercharges too.

Now Sup Docs can weigh each shipment or determine zone charges. So billing can be more accurate from now on. Also, there are a couple more alternatives: Now shipments can go via United Parcel Service (UPS) when the method costs less or even exclusively through UPS under certain conditions. No matter which way, it's possible to save as much as \$50,000 yearly. Also, usually UPS is faster than USPS...especially fourth class services.

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STRUCTURES...HO!

Dates for 10 meetings on structures...and the cities where the meetings will be held have been set. They are Nov. 17, Montpelier, Vt.; Nov. 28, Fayetteville, N.C.; Nov. 29, Huntsville, Ala.; Dec. 4, Sioux City, Iowa; Dec. 5, Sedalia, Mo.; Dec. 6, Wichita Falls, Tex.; Dec. 11, Boulder, Colo.; Dec. 12, Spokane, Wash.; Dec. 13, Fresno, Calif.; and Dec. 18, Lafayette, Ind.

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Reserve

CLICKING IVAN

The cover story in the June issue of National Geographic is a firsthand account of a visit last summer by 12 4-H members to the Soviet Union. They describe "the uncommon experience of living and working in the breadbasket of the Soviet Union."

Unique to their experience were the hours the delegates had with the editorial and photo staff of the National Geographic in a 3-month orientation period at the 4-H Center here in D.C.

Four delegates received intensive training in photography and got cameras to take with them. All 12 received film. Then when the group returned from Russia, several were brought to Washington again by the magazine to help in the final selection of prints. And one 4-H'er was selected as the writer of the story mainly because he sent several newsletters home about his Soviet experience.

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MORE SPEECH OPENINGS We're still receiving notes about speech openings and experiences. Gordon Graham, U. of Arizona, cites these opening remarks: "I've made far too many notes and I know they are not too copious...." Gordon says he doesn't know how that one turned out.

Then Arland Meade, U. of Conn., wrote: "I shared the speaking slots at a Grange hall in my parents' hometown of Leeds, Maine, with a lawyer who broke the Republican habit and became a successful (Democrat) county attorney for several terms.

"Being tired of the usual (I'm so glad to be here with you) type, I started out by being smart-aleck and saying 'I'm going to start telling my message without even following custom in saying I'm glad to be here.'

Mr....followed, and neatly said: 'I'll go along with the start made by Mr. Meade and not take any of your time saying how glad I am to be here...but I DO want to say that I certainly am glad that you are here with me.' He got the applause; I didn't."

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INTENDED OR NOT...

Speaking of Arland, the other day Jim Johnson, GPA, said: "Hey look at this idea." He had an envelope with one of those glassine envelopes in which bills usually come. By looking through the window, we could see these words...among others: "To quench your thirst--drink plenty of water." By shaking the contents around, we could also note the words..."a glass of milk can quench your thirst and....minerals to meals and snacks...a salad and whole grain crackers makes a light...."

Jim's address was printed at the side of the window. It appeared as if the U. of Conn., mailer of the piece, had intentionally used the window envelope to entice readers to open the mail. On the other hand, maybe the university just ran out of regular envelopes. Anyhow, Jim and "Inside..." dropped by the cafeteria and had a snack....

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QUESTIONS...JUST DIAL Ben Blankenship, Economics, Statistics, and Cooperatives Service (ESCS) has sent us an update of a handy-dandy brochure called "ESCS User's Guide." It's a list of all specialists within ESCS who can provide much of the economic information you'll need about agriculture and related topics, categorized by those who can give you the latest production and stocks estimates and those who can help with supply-demand-price relationships...and those who can help with cooperative information. The booklet is complete with telephone numbers and you can get your copy if you'll write Ben or call his publications office (202) 447-7255.

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LUX OF NEBRASKA We were sorry to learn the other day of the death of Elton Lux, first extension editor in Nebraska. He also had worked for KFAB in Lincoln. He was 78.

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REPORTS REPORT
RESEARCH Two interesting research reports came our way this week. One from the U. of New Hampshire neatly presents explanations of research highlights that benefit nonfarmers as well as farmers and has an energy theme. It's a publication of the N.H. Ag Exp Sta and McIntire-Stennis Cooperative Forestry Program with an introduction by Howard Townsend, N.H. commissioner of agriculture.

The other report, about the Ag Exp Sta at Auburn U. in Alabama, tells of 1978 work of the station during a "year that saw cash farm sales reach \$1.9 billion." Using full color photographs, the job covers the departments of the university--including a section on "the printed word and other media" and a list of projects underway during the year.

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AGNET UPDATE Skip Roberts, U. of Wyoming, sent us an update on his state's use of AGNET, the agricultural and consumer network that's been established in four western states. Main use of the system has been to help agents respond to questions on beef outlook, machinery costs of operations, crop budgets, beef marketing, animal nutrition and farm and ranch planning.

A computer text editing team from Wyoming (including Skip) recently visited Indiana U. and Michigan State U. to review their programs. This fall, Wyoming will have installed about \$5.5 million worth of new equipment which should open up "a whole new world of text editing capabilities," Skip says.

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HOW'S THAT AGAIN? Somebody must be kidding someone, Barry Jenkins, GPA, thinks. He got a letter from a professor of journalism at a rather well-known J-school recently requesting some kind of information. Barry says he can't understand the request. It goes like this, in part:

"The purpose of this project is to provide the media with a comprehensive listing of data-based news story topics, a description of what a particular type of data describes, information on the frequency at which the data is customarily available and the source of the data...."

Barry figures there's a new jargon developing "out there" that sounds almost like government bureaucrateese. Seems we used to call it gobblygook.

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LOOK AT WISCONSIN

A note from Len Maurer, U. of Wis., about plans to move into a departmental editor structure included four (yes, four) job announcements.

Each is to be called "academic specialist," but each has a different working title. They are Animal Sciences Departmental Editor, Plant Sciences Departmental Editor, Natural Resources and Food/Basic Sciences Departmental Editor, and Social Sciences Departmental Editor.

Each editor will work with the department(s) reflected in the working title, but each also is responsible to the Department of Agricultural Journalism.

Deadline for applications for the animal sciences and the natural resources editors is August 17. Deadline for the other two is Aug. 24. Each position requires a B.S. degree--preference will be given to applicants with advanced degrees and/or experience in communication--and a strong educational or work experience background in production agriculture and the science involved in the job being applied for. Writing, editing, and other comm. skills are necessary.

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To apply for any of the four jobs, write Len at 440 Henry Mall, Madison 35706 or call him at (608) 262-1464

And, for those of you interested in his departmental editor structure plan, we'll bet Len will ship you a copy of a question/answer piece about it if you'll ask him. He used it to explain the plans to college deans.

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WFAOSB COMMENTS

Jack Roney, World Board (WFAOSB, if you can remember the acronym) sends a couple of items for everyone to know about: (1) Sally Michael has joined his staff as a writer. Sally comes from the Providence Evening Bulletin and the Newport Daily News, with stops along the way with the Navy and the General Services Administration, via San Francisco.

Then (2), the theme for the 1980 Agricultural Outlook Conference will be "Agriculture in a World Setting." Tom Netting, ESCS, will head the information committee for the conference...the committee will have several agency inf reps on it and will be responsible for pre-conference publicity, during conference press relations, and post-conference followup.

Jack says he's not trying to increase overall attendance this year--the auditorium can't hold any more--but he would like to expand press coverage, both print and electronic. Anyone with ideas might call Tom at (202) 447-5450 or Jack at (202) 447-5447.